

/94 cont. /

When the agreement

585 is reached an inauspicious /sic/ day is chosen to welcome the
[292] wife. The bride wears a moon-white gown and walks holding a
parasol, half open, half shut, called the shame-hiding parasol.
Her father and mother, brothers, and relatives escort her to
[582] the husband's house. The dowry consists of everything from
cattle and sheep and goats to plows and harrows. They do not
enter by the main door but through a hole bored through a wall.
Men and women sit together. The bride is not allowed to look
left or right, or else the husband would be displeased for fear
that she may be fond of some one else. The couple takes each
a bowl of rice, a piece of fish, and a cup of wine dregs. Next
they visit the paternal uncles' houses in the same village, at
each eating and drinking the same items. On their return home
they are husband and wife, but they do not spend the night to-
[582] gether." It also says: "The Miao do not object to marriage
between people of the same surname, but relatives do not
marry. On the wedding night the bride sleeps with her mother,
who leaves only when the groom gives her some silver as a
gift /95/, called the "mother's money" or "milk money." It is
generally about two or three liang of silver. A wealthy family,
556 seeing a pretty girl, might order their son to drag the girl from
583 behind. This is called "carrying off a woman and marrying
584 her by force." The girl's family attracted by their wealth,
do not engage the girl to anyone else, but get a go-between
to discuss betrothal presents. When a virgin has an affair with
836 a man, her parents know about it but do not forbid it. On the
contrary, they consider this evidence that the man finds her
desirable. But, if one's wife or concubine is seduced, then
684 they raise knives, facing each other, and money is required
[937] as compensation. If a husband and wife do not get along,
586 the husband may divorce her and marry again; and the wife
may do the same. As to improper sexual conduct, instances
837 were very rare even in former days, and today the Miao have
become more aware of ethical and moral obligations." (What
is recorded in the Miao Fang Pei Lan is to the same effect.)

timber into agricultural implements, and did so. I have never found out what the truth of the matter was, but the Miao lost his case because the *hsien* judge found that his witnesses had not told the truth at other points.

Another case was that of a Miao who had become so angry at his wife that he had her jailed. Her relatives wanted to have her released so that her child need not be born in prison. The husband had disappeared and could not be found to ask him to change his mind. I wrote to the magistrate in the next *hsien*, and after his condition that some merchant in the city go surety for her was met, she was released.

A family in Shang-sai wished to build a house. The head of the family borrowed money from his brother. This brother later brought suit for the return of some of the loan. This was paid at the *hsien* offices on the day set, but the brother did not appear to receive it. Later the family who had received the loan sued the brother for the expense to which they had been put because of his failure to come and receive the payment on the day set.

These, of course, were only a few of the disputes which arose in the village or among the whole group of Cowrie Shell Miao. Most small matters were settled among themselves. Much of the old man's time was taken up with such cases. Sometimes others of the village elders were called in for consultation. This was according to the Chinese Government system, though in effect this formed the village government, or council. If matters could not be settled by them, they were taken before the *lien pao* official, and, if necessary, to the *hsien* magistrate.

Economic Institutions. Within Cowrie Shell Miao society there were no specific economic institutions. Families formed economic units, and as such carried on trade with Chinese merchants and rice brokers in the *hsien* city. Just inside the walls were a few tea-shops owned by city-dwelling Cowrie Shell Miao, conveniently situated for visiting country kinfolk to gather before they returned to their villages from market. The shop keepers were gardeners and farmers as well, and much of their trade was really a form of family visits. In their shops, as well

[167 cont.]

684 The adulterous wife usually is repudiated and her parents must
586 refund the dowry. The betrayed husband has the right to kill his wife
and even her accomplice. This right is almost never exercised.

548 N. B. — We have said above (paragraph relative to the general
778 character of the "Méo" that many "Méo" young women were of rather
easy virtue and even examples of prostitution are cited without the
slightest dishonor to those engaged in it. All Europeans who have
passed through Dongvan or have lived there for a while, are familiar
with the famous "sacred wood" located within a few hundred meters
of the post (it may be seen in the background of photo 467, Plate
41). This wood, of small extent, is situated between two hills.
There are very fine trees, several groups of rather picturesque rocks,
and it encloses the ruins of an ancient pagoda.

548 When a European goes for a walk in this wood, one may soon
see descending from the neighboring hillsides where they are working,
several young "Méo" women coming to offer the stroller their smiles
and ... all the rest. It is only just to add, however, that the nymphs
of the "sacred wood" of Dongvan do not always belong to the "Méo"
group and that they also include young "Lolo" women (of the kind
photo 465, Plate 30 shows).

764 The respect and worship of the dead are not as rigorously ob-
[769] served among the "Méo" as in the other groups. The funerals, like
the other great events of life — births and marriages — are scarcely
more than occasions for drinking and feasting.

[825] The corpse, dressed in his best clothes, is fastened standing up-
right against one of the walls of the hall of honor, where relatives,
neighbors, and friends are gathered together. For three days the
feasts and the dances alternate without interruption. The deceased
is invited to share in the meals and often small pieces of meat are
placed in his mouth. In certain tribes, a dog is killed, which then
is fastened to the hand of the deceased by means of a paper ribbon.
This dog is charged with guiding the steps of his master on the path-
ways of the other life.

The site of the grave designated by the priest-sorcerer, the
corpse is carried on a stretcher to the place of burial. When a coffin
is built, the placing of the body in the bier is done at the last moment,
at [168] the edge of the trench, as soon as it is dug. The cortège,

/92 cont. /

836 [562] With regard to the boys, however, the parents are positively proud of the successes of their sons in this respect. The chief, Tsin Tsai, for instance, told me that his second youngest son was especially clever with the girls. He had surely inherited this from him, because in his youth he had been called a "tiger among the girls"!

848 [842] It is strange that illegitimate children are relatively rare, although I was repeatedly told that no contraceptive devices are used. If a girl gives birth to an illegitimate child, however, the families concerned immediately change their attitude, /93/ and the parents of the lovers forcefully insist on the marriage of the young people. The girl is ready for this under all circumstances, but it sometimes happens that a young man wants to evade his obligation. In this case both families [626] put such pressure upon him that he practically always gives in. If not, he is obliged to pay any indemnity that the girl's [684] parents demand. If he is not in a position to do this, he has to marry for otherwise he would be severely punished by the chief of the village.

627 848 If a young man should deny paternity, the testimony of the girl, or the young mother, is valid in doubtful cases. She summons her parents and those of the young man and leads them to the place where she had her meetings with the young man. She describes details which almost always force the young man to withdraw his denials. Moreover, in the generally small communities, it is probably always known "with whom a girl is going," as my informants said. On the other hand, if the seducer pays the price asked by the girl's parents, the matter [951] is regarded as settled, and the illegitimate child remains with the family of the mother and belongs to this family.

114 847 848 In contrast to my observations, separate authors report that the Meau try to get rid of illegitimate children through abortion or at the latest after the birth. Lajonquière (1).

1. II. p. 317.

for instance, writes: "If a child is conceived out of wedlock,

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M:20 AE5

/108 cont. /

A even the clothes of the secondary wives, belong to her.
 595 Among the Akha, the position of the daughter-in-law, who is
 [422] the first to be called upon for assistance in all the difficult or
 [606] unpleasant work of the women, is similar to her position among
 [179] the Meau, and presumably has likewise been influenced by the
 Chinese. Among the Akha, as among the Meau, after the
 wedding both sexes are required to observe marital fidelity,
 M which among the Meau at least is not always followed. If a
 837 man commits adultery with a girl, it is considered unimportant,
 684 provided that there are no consequences. If there are, the
 man must marry the girl or pay an indemnity agreed upon.
 It is different if a man commits adultery with a married woman
 and the affair is discovered. In this case, the seducer has to
 pay the deceived husband the entire bride price or he will be
 punished by the village chief. Moreover, the disclosure of
 A such a case is a terrible disgrace for the seducer, whose prestige
 M in the community suffers greatly (see the section, "Dissolution
 [558] of Marriage," in this chapter).

The obligation for marital fidelity for both sexes is stricter
 among the Akha than among the Meau.

Telford (1) reports that among the Akha of Kengtung

1. Page 108.

A a married, but childless woman may have sexual intercourse
 184 now and then with an unmarried man. If she becomes
 837 pregnant, her husband has to /109/ slaughter a pig and give it
 to her lover. I assume that the reference to a slaughtered pig
 means that a sacrificial feast must be arranged.

M Wife exchange, the lending of wives, and outright wife-
 837 purchase, under which I do not include the indirect purchase
 432 for marriage described above, are equally unknown among the
 583 Meau and Akha. It can be assumed, I think, that in former
 M times among the Meau a purchase of wives in some form as
 174 yet unknown might have been practiced. In any case this is
 583 indicated by the fact that the Meau believe it is not proper
 432 to sell the household broom, because this would be tantamount

/112 cont./

586 extremely rare and usually the parents straighten out the
769 matter. If there is a divorce nevertheless, the ancestors are
not informed and no sacrifice is offered, lest the ancestors' attention be drawn to the unpleasant fact.

586 Among the Meau a husband has no divorce-right. This
837 is only logical since it is possible for him to marry another girl at any time. The wife, on the other hand, can get a divorce, though this is somewhat difficult. To begin with, the only grounds for divorce for her is her own marital infidelity and her flight with the seducer. First of all, therefore, she has
[558] to find a man who is willing to shoulder the unpleasant aspects of adultery and the ensuing loss of his prestige.

• [64] If the adulteress refuses to return to her husband, the adulterer and seducer, or his family, must repay the bride price to the deceived husband. If he is not able to do this at once, he must pay it in installments, /118/ and this may sometimes take a long time. All of the woman's children
[85] who were born before the complete recovery of the bride price belong to the former husband. The future children belong to the new husband only after the final payment of the bride price.

Moreover, the adulterer sought must be able to take upon
[614] himself the enmity of the family of the husband, which is no
[578] easy matter if this is a powerful sib. It is precisely in such
[595] sibs, however, that unhappy wives are the most common. The husband is often old, has several wives, and is able to buy his new wife by reason of his money. She, in turn, had looked forward to a different life and instead is treated badly by the wives superior to her, but especially by her mother-in-law, whereas the husband pays no attention to her.

Since the regulations mean a heavy burden for the new husband, it is not easy for a wife eager for a divorce to obtain her freedom.

586 If the wife of a Meau sees absolutely no way out and yet
648 wishes to leave her husband, she turns to a Chinese trader (see
587 the chapter, "Trade"). They travel around a great deal and
[583] know all the Meau villages and the conditions prevailing among

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c) Criminal Law

673 Regarded as crimes among the Meau are: theft, robbery, manslaughter, lying, bodily injury, and offense by assault, whereas verbal offenses are not ordinarily punished. Furthermore, kidnapping, especially of children, is regarded as a crime. In former times, treason was added to the list of possible crimes which were punished.

684 Incest, on the other hand, is punished exclusively by the
ancestors; the people do not interfere. If it becomes known,
[769] however, it is regarded as the utmost disgrace.
[625]

At first it seems surprising that rape generally remains unpunished. Since, however, in the life of the Meau a girl can hardly be taken unawares without some co-operation on her part -- there are always female companions or family members nearby when a girl leaves a village -- it is assumed that a girl who goes off alone with a boy is prepared for every eventuality. If a case of rape should occur, however, the girl's father demands two or three pieces of silver from the culprit, who will pay without opposition. The case is different if the girl becomes pregnant. Then no distinction is made between rape and voluntary surrender. Even then, however, as was set forth in detail in the chapter, "Life in the Community," the section, "Courtship and Betrothal," no pressure is exerted for marriage. /ills. 46-51 appear here on unnumbered pages/ /249/ although the girl's parents in particular will make every attempt to bring about the marriage.

[848] If a girl who is pregnant as a consequence of the wrong done to her should give birth to a stillborn child, the culprit must pay the same price for the stillborn child as is charged for children who must be turned over to a creditor in lieu of payment, namely, 70 pieces of silver for a boy, and 50 pieces for a girl.